



Onsite Child Care for Employees: *Getting Started—An Employer's Guide*

Looking to open a **child care** facility on your worksite? Here are some steps to get you started on this Work/Life strategy:

Step One: Preliminary Inquiry

Start by identifying possible leaders for the planning process, and assess the likelihood that new policies or programs will be given serious consideration by decision-makers.

Typically, companies find that interest in work/life issues arises at various levels in the company:

- Employees who need help balancing family needs with work responsibilities,
- Managers who want to address absenteeism, retention, recruitment, or other business issues,
- Executive leadership interested in maintaining a competitive edge.

Determine who might spearhead this new venture and the level of company-wide support for family-friendly policies or programs. Representatives from all levels of the company should be included: administration, management, and employees at other levels. Also, an experienced work/life consultant may be helpful in guiding the planning process and planning for implementation.

Develop realistic expectations for the planning process, by considering the following questions:

- How receptive will employees and management be to undertaking a needs assessment?
- What is an appropriate time line?
- What financial resources are available for this project?
- Is outside expertise needed?

Step Two: Assessment

If the preliminary inquiry indicates some potential for successful implementation or expansion of work/life policies, move on to the assessment phase. A sample employee survey can be found at jobs.utah.gov. If a survey seems too formal or time-consuming, consider using focus groups or ask for informal feedback from managers, supervisors or the human resource department.

Review Current Programs and Policies

Establish the baseline for your planning by reviewing information about the current work/life programs available in the company.

Gather the following information from appropriate departments in your company:

- The existence of any work/life policies, including flexible work arrangements, and other programs
- Number of employees currently benefiting from these policies
- Which employee groups use these programs: managers, line staff, executives, others
- Cost analysis of current programs
- Internal communications process for informing employees about existing programs

Compile Company Data

The company's interest in establishing effective work/life programs and policies is derived from its understanding that the workforce is changing and those changes have an impact at the workplace. Gather information on the following:

- What is the turnover rate?
- What is the absenteeism rate?
- What is the recruitment success?
- Are these statistics any different for employees with child care responsibilities?

Compile Employee Data

It is important to collect the following information directly from the employees; assumptions made about employees' needs and preferences is rarely accurate and can lead the process astray.

What is the current profile of the employees?

- Age
- Income level
- Marital status
- Number and ages of children of employees
- Number of employees planning to have or adopt children within two years
- Number of employees caring for older relatives

What do the employees know about current work/life programs and how do they feel about their experience with the company?

- What programs do they know about and use?
- Are there any barriers to using the current programs?
- What would be most helpful to employees in balancing work and family?

Step Three: Analysis

With information compiled from company records and employee survey or focus group responses, the advisory committee can review and interpret the available data. The overall goal will be to compare the effectiveness of current programs and policies with employee needs and company objectives.

Review current programs and policies

- Which programs work well and make a difference for employees?
- How much do they cost and are they cost-effective?
- Do they make a difference in the company's goals of reducing absenteeism or turnover and increased recruitment?
- What other programs or policies might be most beneficial to the employees?
- What are top priorities for program implementation or expansion?
- What person or department should oversee a pilot project?

Step Four: Implementation

Once you've established that your workforce has a need for child care, you should determine whether you want to create a space for a child care facility and lease it out to an existing child care business, or run the operation yourself.

That choice will determine what insurance provisions you will need, and what level of direct management your child care facility will require from you.

Creating a facility and choosing a child care vendor

Most companies have opted to create an onsite physical facility, either by building new or renovating an existing structure, and then using a child care vendor. For help finding the right child care vendor for you, contact your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (find out how at jobs.utah.gov).

If you choose to run the program yourself, rather than contracting out to a child care vendor, one of the first things you'll need is a license to operate as a child care provider. The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Child Care Licensing, issues licenses by determining if child care facilities are in compliance with applicable rules and state laws. The licensing guide found at jobs.utah.gov will smooth out the road to your business obtaining a child care center license. The instructions will help you successfully complete your license application and be ready to take this important Work/Life step!